

DIALOGUE

DECEMBER 2003

Successes In Southern African Agriculture Initiative

In December 2003 FANRPAN was represented at an international conference organized by IFPRI, NEDAP, CTA and INWent in Pretoria, South Africa, for an institution-wide review of Successes in African Agriculture. The aim of this exercise was to examine instances in which important advances have occurred in the past in African agriculture, and identify promising avenues for achieving similar successes in the future. Success is defined in this case, as "a significant durable change in agriculture resulting in an increase in agriculturally derived aggregate income, together with reduced poverty and/or improved environmental quality".

FANRPAN in line with its mandate to promote the adoption of sound agricultural policies in the region through research, analysis, advocacy and capacity building, is developing an initiative to continually review, identify and disseminate best practices and successful policies, including promotion of exchange visits between farmer organizations as a training tool.

At the end of the successes in African Agriculture Conference of December 2003, delegates adopted a Pretoria Statement on the Future of African Agriculture, which reads as follows:

'Preamble

Significant poverty reduction will not be possible in Africa without rapid agricultural growth. Only improved agricultural productivity can simultaneously improve welfare among the two-thirds of all Africans who work primarily in agriculture as well as the urban poor who spend over 60% of their budget on food staples.

Regrettably past performance has proven inadequate. Africa remains the only region of the developing world where per capita agricultural production has fallen over the past forty years. To stem deepening poverty, social inequity and political instability, African farmers, governments, international partners and private sector must all do better in the future. Recognizing this imperative, African Heads of State and Government agreed, at the African Union Summit in July 2003, to make agriculture a top priority and to raise budget allocations for agriculture to a minimum of 10% of total public spending within five years.

Africa's sluggish aggregate performance, however, masks a rich historical record of substantial agricultural successes.

(continued on page 2)



Mr. Chinkutha, a farmer in Malawi in his Freedom Gardens.

Successes in Southern African Agriculture initiative

(continued from page 1)

Though these episodic and scattered booms have proven insufficient to sustain aggregate per capita growth in agriculture, they do prove informative in pointing to promising areas for effective intervention for the future. In a rapidly changing global environment with increasingly concentrated market power and rapidly changing biological, information and communication technologies and given growing pressures on the natural resource base and public budgets, governments and their private sector partners must learn to apply the lessons from these past successes.

Evidence from a series of successful episodes in African agriculture suggests two fundamental pre-requisites for sustained agricultural growth as well as a number of promising specific opportunities.

Fundamental pre-requisites

- **Good governance.** High-level political commitment has consistently proven essential to improving the welfare of farm households. It translates directly into favourable policy environments and budget allocations to agricultural support institutions and related infrastructure. Effective farmers organizations remain central to improving the communication and articulation of farm sector needs to government. Both farmers' organizations and governments must take responsibility for initiating overtures and organizational reforms to make this possible. We call upon governments to work closely with private sector, civil society and farmers' organizations in the allocation of increased public funding to agriculture. In consultation with the private sector, governments should create and facilitate an enabling environment for the private sector to perform.
- **Sustained funding for agricultural research and extension.** Raising productivity remains central to boosting farm output and lowering consumer food prices. Virtually all of the successes we have identified involve some form of improved biological, mechanical technology or organizational arrangements. Therefore, governments must elevate funding for agricultural research and extension. Furthermore, it is important that farmers' innovations be mainstreamed into research agenda. They together with donors, must ensure the training of staff capable of mastering new biological research technologies. Given the growing role of private research in biotechnology and hybrid breeding, governments must develop partnerships and protocols for making new technologies developed in the private sector available to smallholder farmers.

Promising opportunities

- **Soil and water conservation.** We have been impressed with the number and range of innovative efforts by farmers and researchers to sustain soil fertility and water resources in response to an increasingly degraded natural environment. Therefore, further testing of these models across national borders merits additional examination and support with the aim of refining and scaling up the successes in restoring and sustaining soil fertility. This will require interaction among formal researchers, farmers and their supporting institutions.
- **Replication of proven commodity-specific breeding and processing successes.** We are impressed with the importance of up-scaling cassava breeding and processing research to meet food security, livestock feed and industrial uses. Strong complementarities across regions suggest regional cooperation and sharing of biological and mechanical technologies will magnify returns. Tissue-culture bananas and Nerica rice offer further examples of commodity-specific replication potential. NEPAD and leading centers of technology development should take the lead in initiating this exchange.
- **Marketing and information systems.** Mechanisms for aggregating and improving the quality of the products of smallholder farmers and providing relevant and timely market information will enhance market efficiency. This will prove necessary in enabling them to compete in increasingly concentrated domestic, regional and global markets. A variety of models exist - contract farming among cotton and horticulture producers, dairy marketing groups and others - for grouping small farmers into economically viable market entities.
- **Vertical supply chains.** To improve efficiency, raise value-added in production and processing, and ensure improved coordination between producers and final markets will require increasing attention to supply chain management rather than an exclusively production orientation. Successes in cotton, horticulture, dairy, maize and cassava all reveal the importance of vertical farmer to market coordination.
- **Regional cooperation in trade and agricultural technology.** Regional trade offers significant potential for moderating food insecurity through cross-border exchange. Harmonization of trade regulations on a regional basis will prove necessary to facilitate these commodity flows. In research as well, countries along common agro-ecological zones mean that regional technology and information exchange offer significant

Successes in Southern African Agriculture initiative

opportunities for sharing research and development overheads, expanding benefits and cost reduction. This cross-border technology exchange has proven virtually important in the cases of cassava, maize and natural resource management technologies. For this exchange, capacity building is necessary. NEPAD and the regional economic organizations remain uniquely suited to facilitate such exchange.

We believe that with renewed commitment to building partnerships between governments, farmers' organizations,

international partners and the private sector, significant gains are achievable in African agriculture. And achieve them we must, to ensure significant economic growth and poverty reduction in the decades ahead.

Readers are invited to highlight to FANRPAN any cases that can be considered to be success stories in the agricultural and natural resource sectors in the Southern African region, for further analysis and follow-up by our research panel.

IITA/FANRPAN collaboration in a Regional Livelihoods Project paves the way for harmonising policies in selected Southern African countries

IITA

Research to Nourish Africa



FANRPAN signed an MOU with The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) in November 2003. FANRPAN will be a major partner to implement the policy module of "Improving rural livelihoods in Southern Africa Project" in collaboration with IITA. FANRPAN policy nodes in Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi, who are the target countries for this project will be conducting policy studies. The nature of this policy module requires a broad range of partners from the target countries and regional bodies with a specialisation in policy analysis.

IITA Activities

IITA in consortium with public and private sector partners is implementing the project on "Improving rural livelihoods in Southern Africa" through a grant received from USAID/RCSA. The aim of the project is to accelerate the shift from subsistence towards a more commercially oriented small-scale agricultural sector, through an integrated and holistic approach that is science-based and that links farmers and processors to growth, value-added markets. Key elements in the program comprise:

- Regional trade policy and an improved ability for Governments and private sector groups to participate more effectively in regional trade negotiations, at the regional SADC (COMESA) levels.
- Market information/intelligence that is disseminated to millions of atomized farmers such that they can understand market dynamics within a liberalized economy and be able to make better decisions based

on market opportunities and local comparative/competitive advantage.

- Strengthened producer/processor organizations with skills in agro-enterprise development such that farmers can benefit from economies of scale within input, output and financial markets.
- Promote crop diversification, both horizontally and vertically linked with the ability/access to know-how to produce quality products at competitive prices.
- Application of science-based production systems through biotechnology products and tools.
- Cross-sectoral linkage of these issues that seek synergies and evaluate impact.

The project activities are expected to contribute to a rapid delivery of three intermediate results namely a) policy frameworks strengthened and business development services in place; b) crop diversification / enhanced productivity programs in place with target communities and c) increased utilization of bio-technology tools and products have been formulated to address the major opportunities, constraints and needs. The above intermediate results contribute directly to the realization of the USAID/RCSA Strategic Plan 2004-2010, in particular its Strategic Objective 15 (SO 15) on "Rural Livelihoods Diversified in Southern Africa" and SO 14 dealing with 'A More Competitive Southern African Economy'. These strategic objectives are in line with the US Presidential Initiative to End Hunger in Africa (IEHA)

(continued on page 4)

IITA/FANRPAN collaboration in a Regional Livelihoods Project paves the way for harmonising policies in selected Southern African countries

(continued from page 3)

Inaugural Meeting

The FANRPAN CEO and representatives from FANRPAN policy nodes were able to attend an inaugural meeting held from 5-7 November in Malawi. The meeting brought together partners from across Southern Africa and elsewhere to develop a common vision, share responsibilities, examine the strategy implementation process and promote collaboration across programs and partners at the national, regional and global levels. The workshop provided a forum for dialogue and consultations among a consortium of partners including organizations (regional networks, NGOs, public institutions, private sector) capable of identifying and addressing biological and policy constraints to agricultural development, with the experience and methods for mobilizing producer organizations, disseminating technological innovations and building the practical links to the business community essential for addressing market imperfections.

FANRPAN and its policy nodes, IITA and other partners identified and agreed on the strategies and action plan for implementing and monitoring project deliverables.

FANRPAN Activities in the USAID/RCSA Project

The initial joint assignment to be undertaken by FANRPAN and its policy nodes is the policy constraints evaluation and prioritisation studies in the four target countries. FANRPAN

in collaboration with IITA is expected to contribute to the USAID/RCSA project through the general intermediate result 1: Policy frameworks strengthened and Business Development Services in Place. Under this intermediate result FANRPAN is expected to contribute to:

- Policies harmonized in selected Southern African Countries.

The specific goal of this result is to provide critical policy analysis leading to dialogue and enhancement of policies within selected SADC countries.

The agreed plan of implementation in the first year to be spearheaded by FANRPAN comprises:

1. Policy Analysis
2. Policy "technology" formulation
3. Communication to Governments
4. Regional Ministerial Conference
5. Follow up (with SADC) of Ministerial decisions with national governments

To assist this process, the grant has enabled IITA and FANRPAN to recruit a Regional Policy Economist housed at the FANRPAN Secretariat who will be in charge of implementing sections of the policy module on the USAID/RCSA project in the four target countries.

Regional support to an expanded multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS in the SADC region

FANRPAN is pleased to announce to all its stakeholders that it was awarded a grant by the European Union through the SADC Health Sector Development Unit for a study on the Impact of HIV and AIDS on Agriculture

and Food Security in the SADC Region. This study is being conducted in seven countries namely Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Further details of this study can be obtained from the FANRPAN Secretariat.

The Rockefeller Foundation Provides Core-Funding support to FANRPAN

FANRPAN would like to thank the Rockefeller Foundation for providing core-funding to FANRPAN as from August 2003 to July 2004, which has assisted FANRPAN to initiate further funding proposals with other potential partners.

Funding of this publication is made possible by (CTA) Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (ACP-EU). FANRPAN is a regional policy network of the Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector in the SADC Region. For further details on the network, please contact: The Chief Executive Officer, FANRPAN, PO Box CY 2265, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe. E-mail: policy@fanrpan.org or visit www.fanrpan.org

 CTA funded publication